

**Amendments to the Claims:**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

**Listing of Claims:**

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1. (Original) A method for securing, using and transferring sensitive information, comprising the steps of:  
calculating a digital signature for a file;  
storing the digital signature within the file;  
encrypting the file including the digital signature; and  
performing a file input-output operation on a proper subset of the file, in a manner that permits such input-output operation without the need to decrypt the entire file.

A. 2. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the step of performing a file input-output operation on the file further comprises:  
inputting a data subset from a file stream; and  
decrypting the data subset in a local function.

3. (Original) The method of claim 2, further comprising the step of:  
updating the digital signature using the data subset input from the file stream and a data subset to be written to the file.

4. (Original) The method of claim 3, further comprising the steps of:  
encrypting the data subset to be written to the file in a local function to produce an encrypted data subset to be written; and  
writing the encrypted data subset to be written to the file.

5. (Original) The method of claim 4, wherein the step of performing file input-output operation on the file further comprises:  
authenticating the file using the digital signature.

6. (Original) The method of claim 5, wherein the step of performing file input-output operation on the file further comprises:  
authenticating the file using the user signature.

13. (Original) The machine readable medium of claim 12, wherein the computer code further comprises:

a third function for opening a file, wherein the third function is capable of authenticating a file with an encrypted digital signature.

14. (Original) The machine readable medium of claim 13, wherein the third function further comprises:

code for creating a temporary, encrypted file and generating a file stream therefrom.

15. (Original) The machine readable medium of claim 14, wherein the computer code further comprises:

code for implementing a digital signature using an symmetric, invertible function.

16. (Original) The machine readable medium of claim 15, wherein the computer code further comprises:

code for implementing a user signature within the file for authentication purposes.

17. (Original) The machine readable medium of claim 16, wherein the computer code further comprises:

a source code library of functions, implemented such that encryption, decryption and authentication a transparent to a source code programmer.

18. (Original) The machine readable medium of claim 16, wherein the computer code is executed in the same address space as a user application.

19. (Original) The machine readable medium of claim 16, wherein the computer code further comprises a database library using said first and second functions.

20. (Original) A method for managing sensitive data, comprising:  
storing the sensitive data in an encrypted file with an encrypted digital signature and an encrypted user signature; and

7. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the step of performing a file input-output operation comprises:

inputting a data subset from an encrypted, temporary copy of the file; and  
decrypting the data subset in a local function to produce an unencrypted data subset read from the temporary, encrypted file.

8. (Original) The method of claim 7, further comprising the steps of:  
updating the digital signature using the data subset input from the encrypted, temporary copy of the file and a data subset to be written to the file;

encrypting the data subset to be written to the encrypted, temporary file in a local function; and

writing the data subset to be written to the encrypted, temporary file.

9. (Original) The method of claim 9, further comprising the steps of:  
copying the digital signature in memory to the encrypted, temporary file; and  
copying the encrypted, temporary file to the file; and  
closing the file.

10. (Original) The method of claim 7, further comprising the steps of :  
authenticating the file using the digital signature.

11. (Original) The method of claim 10, further comprising the steps of:  
authenticating the file using the user signature.

12. (Original) A machine readable medium comprising computer code,  
wherein the computer code further comprises:

a first function for reading an encrypted file with an encrypted digital signature; and

a second function for writing to an encrypted file with an encrypted digital signature; and

wherein the first and second functions do not require decryption of the entire file.

storing a temporary, encrypted copy of the file;  
decrypting a proper subset of the temporary, encrypted copy of the file in a function local to a trusted application when performing a read operation; and  
decrypting a proper subset of the temporary, encrypted copy of the file in a function local to a trusted application when performing a write operation;  
updating the digital signature of the encrypted, temporary file, using the proper subset and a data subset to be written to the encrypted, temporary file;  
encrypting the data subset to be written to the temporary, encrypted file and writing said data subset to the temporary, encrypted file;  
using the encrypted digital signature and encrypted user signature to authenticate the encrypted, temporary copy of the file; and  
updating the file with the encrypted, temporary copy of the file when performing a file close operation.

A. 21. (New) A method for managing sensitive data, comprising:

a) a file creation step comprising:

creating a file containing sensitive data;

calculating a digital signature and a user signature for the file;

storing the digital signature and the user signature in the file together with the sensitive data;

encrypting the file containing the sensitive data, the digital signature and the user signature to produce an encrypted file;

creating and storing a temporary copy of the encrypted file; and

b) a file operation step comprising:

performing an input-output operation on a proper subset of the encrypted file without the need to decrypt the entire file;

the file operation step characterized by comprising:

decrypting a proper subset of the temporary copy in a function local to a trusted application when performing a read operation;

decrypting a proper subset of the temporary copy in a function local to a trusted application when performing a write operation;

updating the digital signature of the temporary copy, using the decrypted proper subset and a data subset to be written to the temporary copy;  
encrypting the data subset to be written to the temporary copy;  
writing the encrypted data subset to the temporary copy;  
encrypting the digital signature and the user signature;  
adding the encrypted digital signature and the encrypted user signature to the temporary copy to authenticate it; and  
updating the encrypted file with the thus modified temporary copy when performing a file close operation.

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